

PRAISE: A WEAPON FOR SPIRITUAL WARFARE

(Psa 149:6-9 KJV) Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD.

I. THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

- A. *Associated with healing the sick.*
- B. *Associated with casting out devils.*
 - 1. If I by the finger of God cast out devils, the kingdom of God is come nigh you.
 - 2. Declaring Jesus is Lord brings victory over the kingdom of darkness.
- C. *Not just casting devils out, but living an overcoming victorious life through spiritual victories.*

II. SPIRITUAL VICTORIES ARE WON THROUGH A VARIETY OF METHODS.

- A. *Intercessory prayer.*
- B. *The confession of God's word.*
- C. *Also won through medium of praise--which actually enthrones the Lord.*
 - 1. (Psa 22:3 KJV) But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.
 - 2. One translation says praises enthrone him--make him Lord.

III. TREMENDOUS VICTORY FOR PEOPLE OF GOD THROUGH PRAISE.

- A. *Jehosophat.* 2 Chronicles 20.
 - 1. Pursued by the enemy.
 - 2. Battle not yours, but God's
 - a. Fear not, be not dismayed. The Lord will be with you.
 - b. Jehosophat bowed.
 - c. Judah and Jerusalem fell before the Lord and worshiped.
 - d. Levites stood up to praise the Lord with a loud voice on high.
 - 3. Singers and musicians put on front line.
 - 4. Give thanks to the LORD, for his love endures forever.
 - 5. It is interesting to note that they were not calling down fire from heaven, or invoking God's wrath upon the heathen.
 - 6. Too much of our "Spiritual warfare" gets distracted with rebuking the enemy, or with calling on God to act for us in some specific way. But these singers were not recommending a battle strategy to God, nor did they bother to curse the enemy.
 - 7. In its essence, their song of praise said, "Lord, we recognize that you are the omnipotent God and that you have promised to fight for us today. So we thank and praise you for the victory, rejoicing in what we know you have already determined to do on our behalf. Words like that release God to act in the way he knows is best. Warfare through praise does not dictate to God what he should do--it praises him for his wisdom and might, recognizing

that he is capable of settling the problem in the best possible manner. We do not focus on the battle or the enemy; we look only to the solution--God!

B. ***Paul and Silas.***

1. Cast out a spirit of divination which brought great gain.
2. Beaten and thrown into prison.
3. After they had been flogged and put in an inner cell, with their feet fastened securely in stocks,
 - a. Around midnight, Silas said, "Paul, did we miss God today? My back hurts, and my feet hurt, and I just don't feel like putting up with all this. Should I invoke a curse on the jailer for treating us like this, or perhaps we should just call down fire on this whole place!"
 - b. Paul groaned a little as he turned his aching body toward Silas and said, "Silas, I think we should praise the Lord! Let's thank him that we're still alive! Let's thank him that he's going to bring something good out of this situation!"
 - c. So at midnight Paul and Silas began to pray and sing hymns unto God!
 - d. And the prisoners heard them.
4. Paul and Silas were not crying out to God for deliverance. They were not rebuking the stocks nor casting demons out of the jailer. They were simply praising God for his greatness and goodness.
5. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose." (Acts 16:26).
6. The story ends with the jailer and his entire household confessing their faith in Jesus Christ.
 - a. God responded to their praise and not only freed them from jail but also delivered an entire family from the clutches of Satan!
 - b. Praise resulted in deliverance and evangelism!

IV. **IN PRAISE, WE NO LONGER ATTACK THE PROBLEM OR THE ENEMY.**

- A. ***We simply confess and rejoice in Christ's Lordship.***
- B. ***We rejoice in the fact that he is Lord and victor in our current dilemma.***
- C. ***When we rejoice in his strength, he goes to battle.***
- D. ***As we confess him as Lord in that situation, our faith begins to rise to the level of our confession, and***
 1. God says, "Why, my children really do believe that I am God and Lord in this situation! In that case, I will display my strength and glory!"
 2. God responds by granting us a great victory!
- E. ***Prayer often dictates to God when we ask him for things when he would want to answer in a different and fuller dimension.***
 1. Praise takes the lid off the possibilities, because it simply confesses and rejoices in the absolute ability of God to be exactly who he is in the situation at hand.
 2. When we confess God's supremacy through praise, our faith rises to the

level of our confession, and he responds.

V. HIGH PRAISES AND THE TWO-EDGED SWORD. Ps 149:6

A. ***High praise.***

1. Refers to an intense level of praise.
2. High praise refers to praise that is occurring high above us right now, the praise that is ascending to the Father from before the throne.
Possible for us here below to participate now in that “high praise.”
By listening with our spirits, we can discern the type of song being sung around the throne. Holy, holy, holy. In earth as it is in heaven.
1. A type or level of praise that ascends into the heavenlies and wars on our behalf.

B. ***Ps 149 links high praise with the two-edged sword, or the word of God.***

1. Executing “vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people.
2. God does not usually respond to our praise by pouring out his wrath and judgment on the heathen.

C. ***God is saying, “There is an inheritance for the church in the nations, but it is not yet claimed.*** Go forth and bind the satanic powers that blind the hearts of men, and reclaim for the kingdom that portion of the body of Christ that has yet to be brought in.”

1. (Isa 30:32 NIV) Every stroke the LORD lays on them with his punishing rod will be to the music of tambourines and harps, as he fights them in battle with the blows of his arm.
2. Get out the tambourine. Get out the guitar. Let the pianist be seated; let the drummer take his place. It is time to go to war. It is time to lead God’s people in high praise, to declare that he is victorious in all the earth.

D. ***God wants to punish the kingdom of darkness by rescuing from Satan’s hand many souls who are now doomed to destruction.***

1. (Isa 25:7 KJV) And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.
2. Mount Zion famous as a place of praise. On that mountain of praise, the Lord will destroy the blanket of darkness that covers cities and families.

E. ***Noise from the temple.*** (Isa 66:6 NIV) Hear that uproar from the city, hear that noise from the temple! It is the sound of the LORD repaying his enemies all they deserve.

VI. PRAISE.

A. ***Praise is preoccupied with who God is and what he has done.***

B. ***Praise is extroverted in nature.***

1. It is characterized by celebration and exhilaration and is expressed through singing, shouting, speaking forth, playing of musical instruments, dancing, and other external forms.
2. Praise is “raising much to-do about God.” The Hebrew people were very emotional and vocal in their expressions of praise and adoration before God.

C. ***Praise is action.***

1. Praise is to be declared or manifested. (Psa 66:8 KJV) O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard:
2. Praise is not praise until it is vocalized or expressed outwardly.

VII. **WORSHIP.**

- A. ***Worship is conversation between God and man, a dialogue that should go on constantly in the life of a Christian.***
- B. ***Worship is giving to God and involves a lifetime of giving to him the sacrifice he asks for: our total selves.***
- C. ***Worship is one's heart expression of love, adoration, and praise to God with an attitude and acknowledgment of his supremacy and Lordship.***
- D. ***Worship means "to feel in the heart."***
- E. ***Worship is extravagant love and extreme obedience.***

VIII. **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRAISE AND WORSHIP.**

- A. ***The outward forms of praise and worship are often identical It is almost as difficult to separate praise and worship as it is to divide soul and spirit.***
- B. ***Worship is an attitude of the heart; praise is an outward testimony.***
- C. ***Praise can sometimes be distant, but worship is usually intimate.***
 1. Drunkards witness to one another.
 2. Jesus said the rocks would cry out if his disciples did not praise him. Rock do not have a relationship with God; no interaction of personalities.
- D. ***Relationship is a requirement for worship. It brings us close to the heart of God.***
- E. ***Praise is always seen or heard; worship is not always evident to an observer.***
 1. Praise is obvious to others.
 2. There is only one who knows whether or not we are truly worshipping.

GOD IS GIVING US A NEW SONG.

- A. ***Sing unto the Lord a new song.*** "For God is great and greatly to be praised!"
- B. ***Miriam rejoiced because enemy drowned in sea.***
 1. Disciples rejoiced that devils subject to them.
 2. Rejoice because your name is written in the Lamb's book of life.

Our song to the Lord.

Let the redeemed of the Lord say so--I'm redeemed; I'm redeemed...
Worthy is the Lamb.